

Trends

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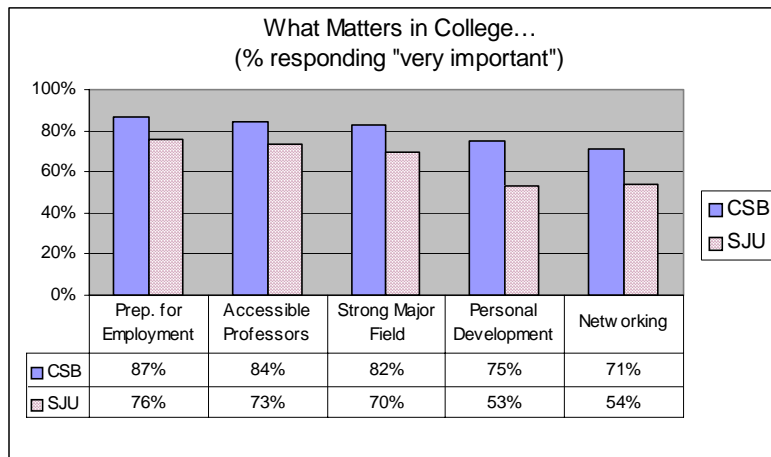
A Research Newsletter Prepared by the Office of Institutional Planning, Research, and Communication

Collegiate Expectations of new CSB/SJU Students

This fall, 735 CSB/SJU students, representing nearly three-quarters of all new students, completed the *New Entering Student Survey: Attitudes, Experiences, and Expectations* (NESS). The survey provides the colleges with an opportunity to identify and evaluate their students' characteristics, experiences, and expectations. The College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University surveyed new entering first year students for most of the last 30 years. This issue of *Trends* examines the collegiate expectations of our new students before they began classes this fall.

Key College Expectations

- Most new entering CSB and SJU students expect to have a positive experience at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University. Over two-thirds of all new students this fall indicated that chances were "very good" they would be satisfied with their undergraduate experience here. CSB/SJU students are more likely than their peers at highly selective Catholic colleges nationally to expect a positive experience. In fall 2003, fewer than 6 in 10 new Catholic college students nationally expected to be satisfied with their college. Our students' apparent pre-disposition to expect a positive experience at CSB/SJU surely supports the colleges' higher than average retention and completion rates. This fall, 96% of all 2004-05 CSB/SJU seniors rated their experiences at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University as "good" or "excellent."

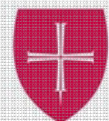


- New students were provided with a list of college characteristics and asked to indicate how important each was to them at CSB and SJU. Preparation for employment after college was the most important characteristic cited by both Saint Benedict and Saint John's students. Fully 4 in 5 new students identified employment preparation as very important. Moreover, 63% said the opportunities to build social and professional networks was very important. Interestingly, in spite of their interest in employment preparation, less than half thought the colleges should place a "strong emphasis" on developing vocational and occupational competence in students.
- The typical new Saint Benedict and Saint John's student in fall 2004 graduated in the top 30% of her or his high school class, had a high school grade average of over 3.6, and earned a composite ACT college entrance exam of 25.2. Almost 70% described their academic ability as

Most new CSB/SJU students expect to have a positive and academically successful experience.

Prepared by John Schell
Executive Assistant
Office of Institutional
Planning, Research, and
Communication

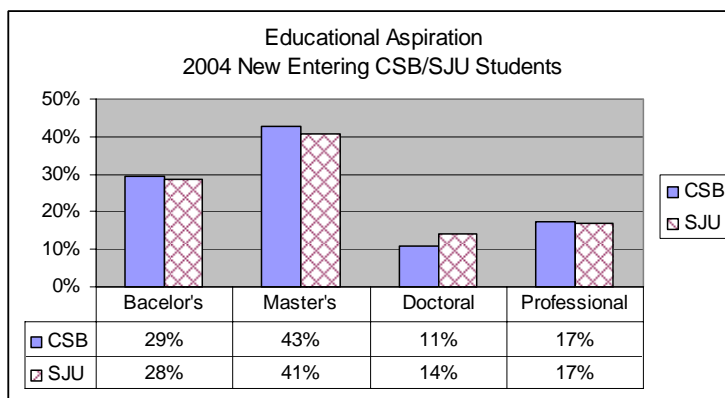
COLLEGE OF
Saint Benedict



Saint John's
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above average in relation to their peers, and nearly three-quarters rated their drive to achieve as above average. It is not surprising, then, that most new students said they expected to earn good grades while at CSB/SJU. Well over two-thirds of all new Saint Benedict and Saint John's this fall reported that they expected to achieve at least a "B" grade average while in college. Their expectations are well founded. The mean cumulative grade point average among 2004-05 CSB and SJU seniors, who had similar expectations as new students three falls earlier, was 3.28.

- Similar to new four-year college students across the country, fully 70% of all new Saint Benedict and Saint John's students in fall 2004 indicated that they expected to eventually complete a graduate or professional degree. Men and women were about equally likely to say they would earn an advanced degree. Among those expecting to complete a graduate degree, nearly 42% identified a Master's degree as their objective. Though the overwhelming majority of new students cited a graduate school aspiration, only 44% said that academic advising in support of graduate school placement was very important. Our students' graduate school aspirations remain strong through their undergraduate experience. This fall, nearly 80% of all CSB/SJU seniors indicated that they planned to eventually obtain a graduate or professional degree (though each year fewer than 20% of all graduates immediately enroll in graduate school).



- Fully 80% of all Saint Benedict and Saint John's students said there was at least some chance they would participate in a study abroad program at CSB/SJU—49% indicated they were very likely to do so. Nearly 90% reported that study abroad opportunities at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University were an important factor in deciding to enroll here (46% said it was "very important"). Study abroad participation rates at CSB/SJU are significantly higher than national averages. Fully half of the senior class this year has studied abroad, compared to just 34% of all seniors at baccalaureate liberal arts colleges nationally.

Departments identified as a probable major by at least 10 new entering students may request detailed summary data comparing their students' characteristics with all new entering students. For additional information, please contact Jon McGee (jmcgee@csbsju.edu) at 5287 or John Schell (jschell@csbsju.edu) at 5452. If you would like to read past issues of *Trends*, please visit our website at <http://www.csbsju.edu/institutionalresearch/trends/default.htm>.